

VZCZCXRO1843  
OO RUEHROV  
DE RUEHJM #2210/01 3441159  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 091159Z DEC 08  
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3474  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEADWD/DA WASHINGTON DC//DAS-ZD/DACS-ZK//  
RUEAHQA/CSAF WASHINGTON DC//POLAD//  
RHMFIUW/CMC WASHINGTON DC  
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC//POLAD//  
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 7436  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4419  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 4269  
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 5763  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 4185  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2755

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 JERUSALEM 002210

SIPDIS

STATE PASS BBG  
STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD  
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR ABRAMS  
CMC WASHINGTON DC FOR POLAD

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD  
LONDON FOR HKANONA AND POL - TSOU  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL KMDR KPAL KWBG KPAO IS  
SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (12/09): THE OTHER ENEMY:  
INTERNAL DIVISION

Please note that Palestinian newspapers are not printed on December 9, 10, 11, in observance of Eid al Adha.

-----  
Main Stories:  
-----

December 8

All dailies led with reporting on Gaza. Israel prevented a "solidarity" boat with humanitarian supplies, organized by Israeli Arab Knesset member Ahmad Tibi, from leaving Israel's Jaffa port for Gaza on December 7. Al Ayyam cites AFP when quoting a senior Israeli official from a December 7 cabinet meeting, noting that the truce with Hamas has completely collapsed and that Israeli Premier Olmert has asked the military to draft possible responses to rocket attacks from Gaza. Al Ayyam reported on a December 7 meeting in Jerusalem between Palestinian Authority Premier Fayyad and Israeli Defense Minister Barak. Fayyad asked Barak to end the Gaza "siege" and allow money transfers into Gaza. Al Hayat Al Jadida reported that Barak responded with vague promises to allow the cash transfers "soon." Al Ayyam reported on Gaza's only power plant in Gaza closing down because it ran out of fuel on December 7. Finally, in another front page article, the paper notes that Fatah has called upon Gazans to fly black flags at their homes to protest Hamas' continued "de facto" rule of Gaza.

Al Hayat Al Jadida's front page cited AFP when quoting Secretary of State Rice noting on December 7 that she does not expect significant progress in the peace process until president-elect Obama takes office. Rice also added that she expects that Palestinians will establish an independent state under the leadership of Mahmud Abbas in the near future, according to reporting.

Al Ayyam's front page cited AFP in quoting former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin Endyk stating on December 7 that Israel should not expect a blank check from the Obama administration. He added that the incoming U.S. administration would adopt policies to create an

environment that is safer and more peaceful, in contrast to President Bush's policies, the paper reported.

All papers front paged the names of 250 Palestinian prisoners that Israel was to release on December 8 as a goodwill gesture. Al Hayat Al Jadida reported that the list represented but a very small percentage of the 11,000 Palestinian prisoners still being detained in Israel.

Al Quds and Al Hayat Al Jadida quoted Israeli Premier Olmert stating during a December 8 cabinet meeting that recent settler violence in Hebron and throughout the West Bank was, "organized terror" and an "organized massacre." He added that he has ordered his Defense Minister to show no mercy in dealing with the perpetrators of violence, according to reporting.

All papers published Consul General Walles Eid al Adha message on inside pages. Walles promises to work with his Consulate team to continue efforts to realize a Palestinian state, living in freedom and prosperity.

-----  
WEEKEND STORIES  
-----

December 7

All front pages highlighted that, "settlers continue attacks in the Hebron and Nablus areas." Papers noted that despite "extensive deployment of Israeli forces," Palestinian houses were set on fire in the Old City of Hebron by settlers from Avraham Avino while other houses were targeted in the vicinity of Qiryat Arba'a settlement. Papers also reported that hundreds of settlers and their supporters held a two-day prayer vigil in front of the evacuated Rajaby building in Hebron and were "escorted" by Israeli soldiers and

JERUSALEM 00002210 002 OF 003

police forces. In photo coverage, Al Quds and Al Ayyam showed a burnt out Hebron house, while Al Hayat Al Jadida highlighted Israeli "left-wing peace activists" demonstrating in Tel-Aviv to demand the withdrawal of all Israeli settlers from the West Bank. In related news, all papers front paged reports that the UN Security Council passed a non-binding resolution commending Israel's eviction of settlers from the Rajaby building and condemning the resulting settler attacks on Palestinians.

UNRWA will run out of food supplies by December 9 and the Gaza power plant will shut down at noon, according to all front pages. In a press conference, UNRWA officials demanded international intervention to allow for supplies to enter the Strip to feed more than 750,000 Palestinians who depend on UNRWA assistance.

Headlines also highlighted calls by the Governor of the Palestinian Monetary Authority Governor and the World Bank on Israel to allow for money transfers to Palestinian Authority employees in Gaza.

Al Ayyam's front page reported that Hamas will not accept Palestinian Authority President Abbas remaining "one day past the end of his term." A Hamas spokesperson on December 6, expressed "resentment" over what he called "the media campaign" against Hamas and its positions and relations with Arab countries. He added that the escalating pressures against Hamas will not force the group to change its fundamental positions and stressed that Hamas will not accept extending President Abbas' term beyond January 9, 2009.

December 6

Chief Palestinian negotiator Ahmad Quray "denounced Israeli official silence on settler attacks," adding that conditions in the Palestinian Territories were "explosive," according to Al Quds' and Al Ayyam's front pages. Quray considered that Israeli officials' silence on the "systematic aggression" signaled a tacit approval that encourages settlers to continue their bloodshed and destruction of property in the Old City of Hebron. The Old City of Hebron, Quray added, has been subject to the most aggressive settler attacks since the beginning of reconstruction efforts and the deployment of Palestinian security forces to Hebron. The Israeli Government's silence aims to "foil" efforts by the Palestinian leadership to enforce rule of law, and therefore, undermines peace efforts as a whole, Quray concluded. In related reporting, Al Quds' noted that Israeli security sources expressed their concern that the "price" of Israeli extremist right-wing violence may be the inflaming of all of the West Bank.

Al Quds and Al Hayat Al Jadida ran wire reporting on, "American troops to act upon Bagdad's approval following the ratification of

the agreement with Washington" (Al Hayat Al Jadida). The papers noted that General Odierno asked his troops on December 5, "to be ready for slight modifications in their MO", particularly since all operations carried by American troops will require prior approval by the Iraqi government according to the signed agreement that will come into effect beginning of 2009.

-----  
BLOCK QUOTES:  
-----

1) Talal Okal opined in Al Ayyam under the title, "Israel responsible ... yes, but what about division?" (12/08): "While touching on components of the Gaza catastrophe, it would be nonsense to continue talking about the responsibility of the Israeli enemy; this is more than clear, but we need to highlight that Palestinian division is another important reason for this catastrophe, which threatens to lead to a total collapse."

2) Palestinian National Council member Azmi Khawaja opines in Al Ayyam under the title, "The Popular Front for the Liberation of

JERUSALEM 00002210 003 OF 003

Palestine on its forty-first anniversary" (12/08): "There is no alternative to [internal Palestinian] dialogue, to bridging the gap and forming a unified Palestinian policy with the consent of all Palestinian factions, so that we can face our bitter reality and remain steadfast in the face of occupation."

Walles